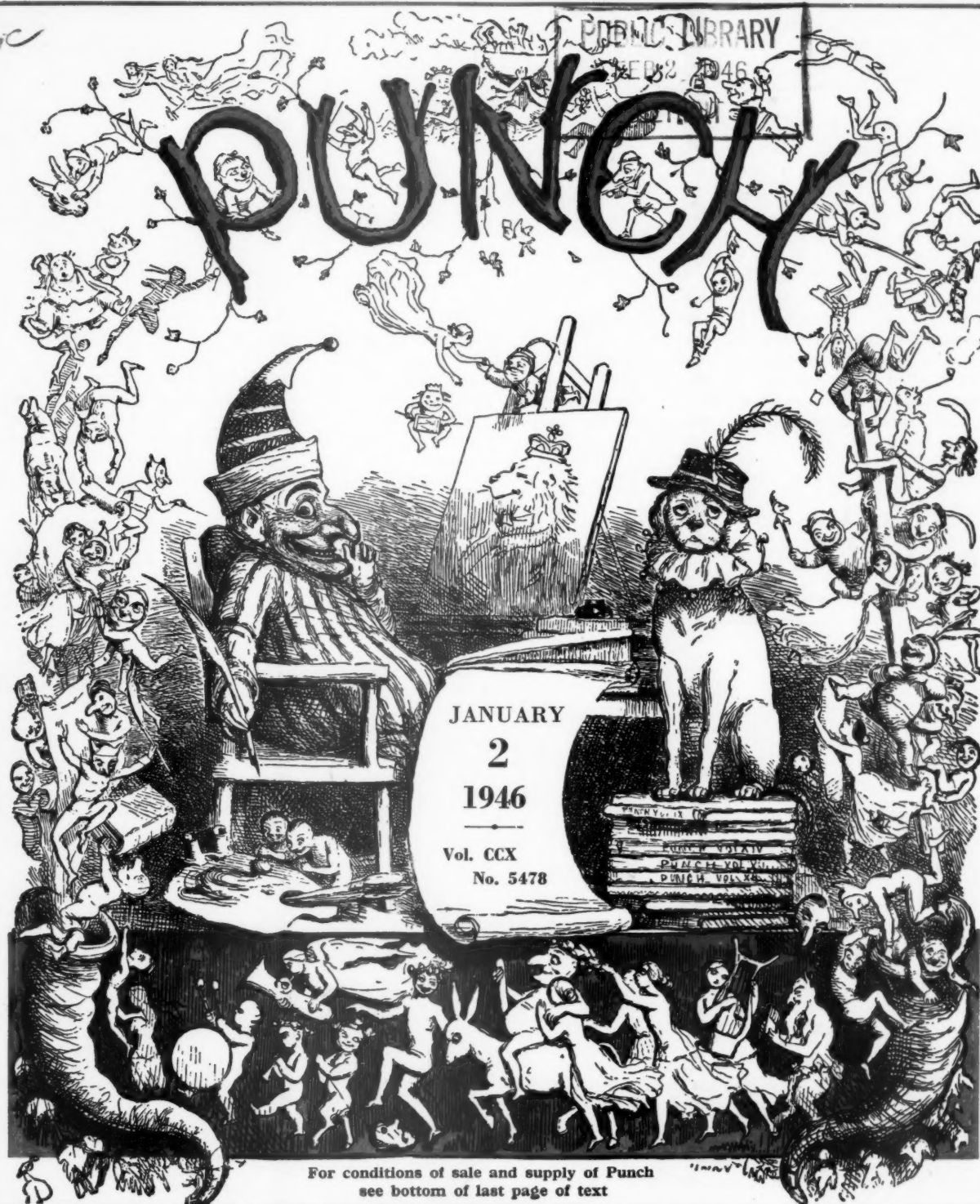


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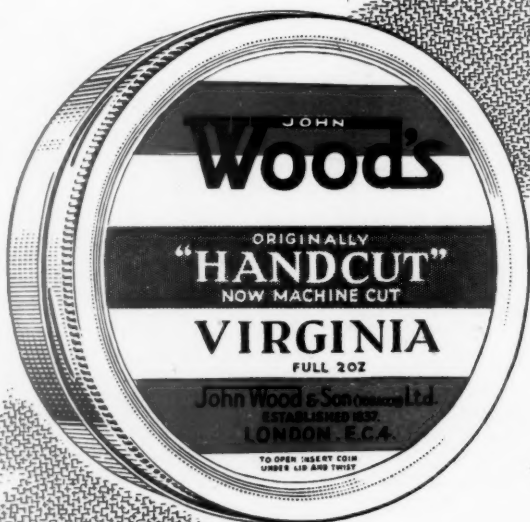
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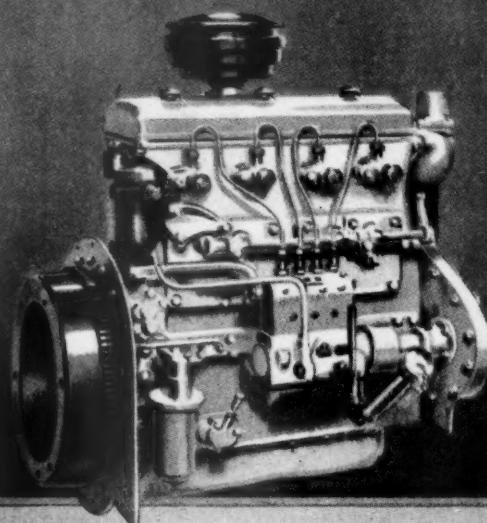
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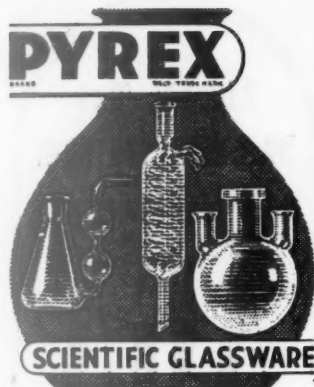
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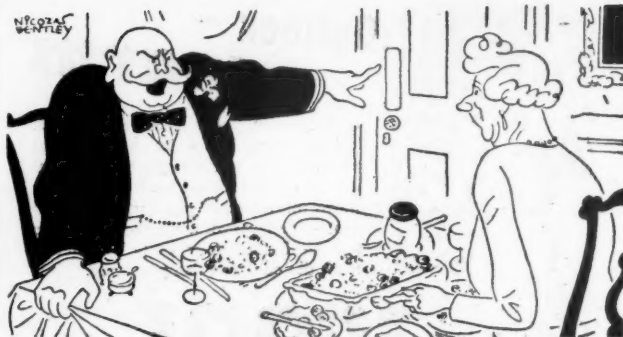
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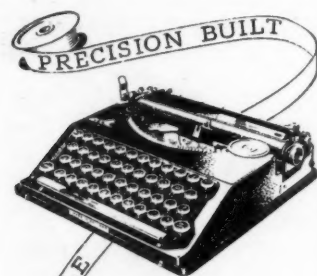
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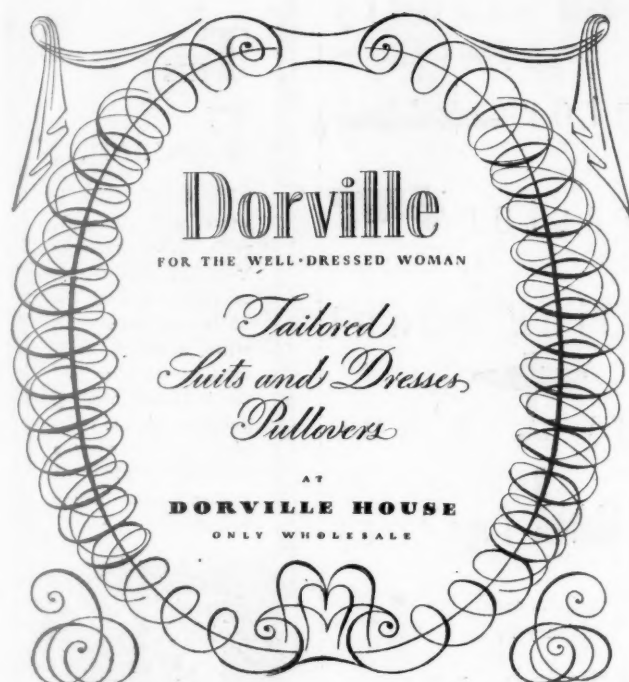
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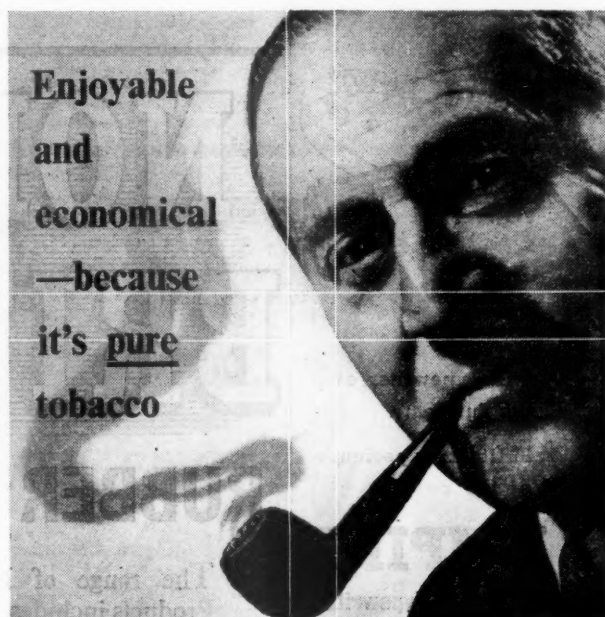
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Charivaria

FIRST prize for bad luck in 1946 goes to the man who dialled 999, asked for Time, and got it.

It should be clearly understood in Washington that Mr. Churchill's forthcoming trip to America must be regarded as coming under reverse lease-lend.

Discussing Britain's whaling ship in the Antarctic a writer wonders what is done with the bones of whales. We assume they are left on the side of the plate.



We understand that patrons at one West End cinema may, if they wish, leave a little extra money at the box-office to defray the enormous cost of the production.

Those who have a room they do not want are requested to inform the local authorities. Any offers from Wormwood Scrubs?

The share-your-houses scheme has not been a success so far. It will improve in the spring when the cuckoos arrive.

A London bandit jumped on the footboard of a passing bus, brandished his revolver, and then jumped quickly off again. We think we know that conductress.

Impending Apology

"It was perhaps too much to expect Burma to revert to peaceful conditions with the return to Rangoon of Sir Reginald Dorman-Smith, the Governor of Burma."—*Civil and Military Gazette*.

When a man was charged with passing a counterfeit shilling in a public house a police witness said it was a very weak imitation. No notice was taken of the prisoner's plea that the pint of beer he received in exchange might be described in similar terms.

"Innocent and unimportant citizens get a thrill when questioned by the police during a comb-out," says a gossip writer. They willingly produce their nonentity cards.

"What has 1946 in store for us?" asks a leading article. Twelve months' hard, as usual.

Agenda

"6.30—REV. RALPH WYNNE FAIRWAY.

Commences a new Ministry to Preach the Gospel, Reseat the church, Re-decorate the Interior, Modernise the Lighting, Overhaul the Organ, etc."—*Church notice in Glasgow paper*.

A soldier anxious to get back to his civilian job as a book-keeper complains that he has nothing to do but tidy the camp garden. He thinks very little of the loose-leaf system.

An Indian fakir is reported to be able to sleep standing upright. He got his early training, they say, as an umpire.

A wine merchant reports that an opened bottle of port was returned to him by an anonymous customer with the words "Wot! No Body?" scrawled on the label.

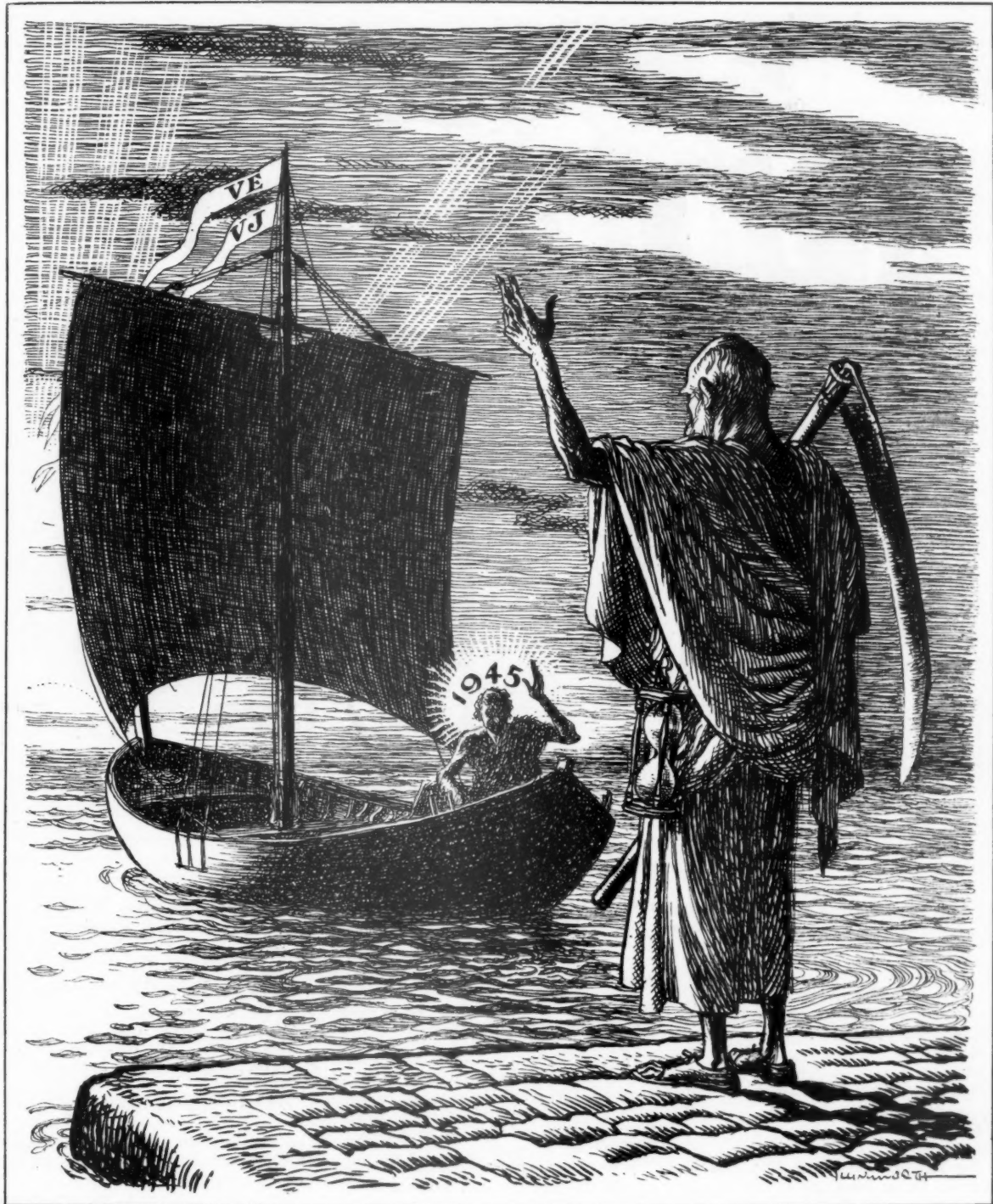
Salvaged linen is used in the manufacture of £5 notes. A housewife says that, judging by the price, salvaged £5 notes are used in the manufacture of linen.

Cold Weather Tip

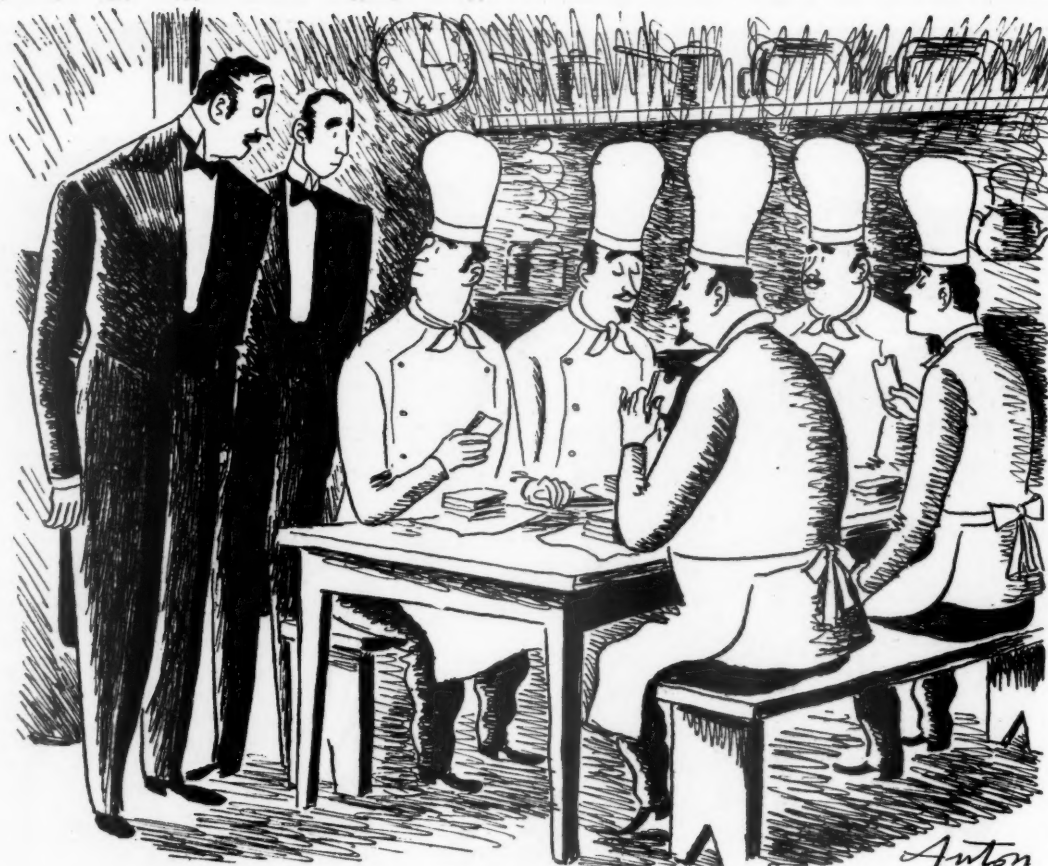
"Hook suspender on leg with fibre loop on outside of sock. Pull top of sock through back of loop and splay over ears." *Instructions on box.*

A Bedfordshire postman who has retired after forty-six years' service delivered his first mail on a penny-farthing. To get a letter delivered nowadays costs just twice as much.





ANNUS MIRABILIS



"I understand you fellows prefer to bring your own sandwiches."

Welcome to Albion

(For the benefit of the great swarm of foreigners who will undoubtedly wish to visit victorious Britain during the coming year the following useful phrases are respectfully offered. No foreign equivalents are given, to save space.)

ON THE AUTOBUS

(You have) room for one more little one on your bus, Miss?

No?

Oh.

One is permitted perhaps to mount the stairs?

No?

Blow.

But already one, three, five, eleven, eighteen buses have passed me by.

It is necessary that I return to my hotel, apartment, lodging, billet, air-raid shelter, own country to-day, to-morrow, on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, before I perish of hunger.

You are a saucy girl.

Pray then, how much (to pay) if I put myself into a posture to assault the conductor of this autobus?

So?

Ouch.

THE TAXICAB

In your country you have many taxicabs, is it not, but it is apparent that all are engaged.

Who then are these persons who ride all day to and fro in taxicabs, never dismounting for the convenience of the waiting citizen?

In France (Poland, Czechoslovakia), it is not permitted to employ taxicabs for the purpose of stealing ducks, geese and poultry.

Quickly. Raise the umbrella. One goes empty.

Ah!

But again! To me! No, I am deceived. He wears the banner down.

Hola!

Zut! He is blind, that one. Observe how he engages himself in my teeth to the fat assassin yonder. In Poland (France, Czechoslovakia) we do not permit that type there.

We of the Resistance, we mount the cabs.

IN THE MAGAZINE

I desire some cigarettes, some cigars and some matches. Wrap them, if you please, and send swiftly to my

hotel of which the name and address is here plainly written.

The English girls laugh more readily than in my country, where we have suffered much, but the teeth are more pretty in Czechoslovakia (France, Poland).

Have you then no cigarettes under the rose (idiomatic)?

But to this gentleman here already you have—

It is intolerable, I am of the Resist—

So. I will return then on Friday for matches. Madam is very amiable.

AT THE RAILWAY STATION

Come, let us join ourselves to this good-humoured English crowd and make a journey to Ilfracombe, which is in Devonshire.

In my country the good-humour of English crowds is well known and commands admiration.

One marches. See, I take in hand my two suitcases, my rug, my parcel of food, my alpenstock for climbing your hills of Devonshire which are renowned and my portfolio. We are off.

The English crowd halts. We have advanced two paces. It is necessary for me to depose my two suitcases, my rug, my parcel of food, my alpenstock and my portfolio. One is not aware for what cause we are arrested.

Aha! Almost I am left behind. Permit me, Madam, to remove my rug from under your foot. We advance again. But again we are halted. I depose my two suitcases, my rug, my alpenstock and my portfolio, but my parcel of food, which is not formidable, I retain.

One behind announces that he will grow the beard to pass away the time. It is the English good-humour. Delightful.

* * * * *

She draws in (idiomatic).

I prefer, if you please, a premier class seat fronting forwards where cigars, etc., may be enjoyed.

I will enter here. No. Five, nine, fourteen persons have entered before me.

Have the goodness, sir, to permit me to precede you. I have a premier class ticket in my portfolio.

He has not the good-humour, that one. In France (Czechoslovakia, Poland) we of the Resistance do not submit ourselves to collaborators.

Aha! I have lamed the gross pig with my alpenstock. Let us unfold my rug here in the vestibule and be at ease.

Where then is my rug? Bedam, I am robbed.

* * * * *

You are right. We will not go to

Ilfracombe with the good-humoured English crowd.

See, I have here one thousand kronen (francs, zlotys). Let us take a small English whisky instead

Jolly good cheers! H. F. E.

o o

What Did You Do in the Great War, Mummy?

"It's Really Quite Simple."

MY hand, clutching a collection of dangerous-looking tools, shakes perceptibly. My knees are as water. I am very frightened.

"So you see it's really quite simple," concludes the chief, handing me the defect list. "You'll find your way around in no time. I'll come and see how you're getting on in an hour or so."

I have a very pronounced just-about-to-step-into-the-dentist's-chair feeling.

"And when Jimmy comes along We will sing this little song:
Thank the Lord that we didn't join for ever,"

carols a sailor from above.

I couldn't agree more.

I climb on board, wondering simultaneously which of the various hatches to lower myself down, whether Ohm's law will prove of practical value (it seems about all I can remember of my scanty course) and whether bluff or a confession of complete ignorance is the wiser course.

I am halfway down a hatch amidships when I hear the first of a series of penetrating whistles. The whistlers look at me when I am all the way down and are sorry for me. "Quiet there," shouts a magnificent beard on my left, not before my vocabulary has been considerably enlarged. An unearthly hush falls. My gaze is caught by some rather arresting pin-ups, but I turn what I hope is a dazzling smile on the nearest matelot and say firmly I have come to attend to the electrical defects. Does he know who can tell me more about them? Anything, just anything, about them, I might have added.

"Torps!" shouts the sailor. "Young lady to see you."

"You lucky man," says his neighbour. I do not feel so sure.

"Don't you trust 'im," murmurs a rather dirtier overall than usual, in passing. I find my supply of backchat meagre.

Torps takes a last mouthful of his

morning baked beans and eyes me doubtfully. "I think," he says finally, through the baked beans, "I'd better go and see the cox'n."

"Swain!" he calls in an injured tone. I hear his voice rise and fall in the distance, more in sorrow than in anger.

Three unfortunates are peeling three enormous piles of potatoes. One has very blue eyes and a nice smile. I help him with his pile and confide my immediate troubles. When we have finished he goes to see how serious the defects are, while I watch a sailor making a bad attempt to sew a badge on a new suit. I hear my blue-eyed sailor in earnest consultation with Torps. I sew on the badge for Lofty, and he too drifts away in Torps' direction.

A man scrubbing the floor (swabbing the deck?) has been eyeing me steadily, muttering "Wirewomen. Wirewomen," at regular intervals.

"How long you bin doing this?" he now demands.

"I finished my course last Friday," I say with quiet pride.

"Ever bin on a boat before?" I feel our 12-foot dinghy is hardly worthy of recognition.

"No," I confess.

"You'll learn," he says with gloomy relish and an air of deep foreboding.

What? I wonder, and when? He does not vouchsafe this.

Lofty returns and says the trouble is really quite simple. He considers the badge worthy of two chocolate bars. I decide inwardly that he is too young to have any children to send them home to and, my conscience quieted, pocket them. This, I think, is the Life.

Torps and his friends return after a little more work with a test-lamp. He explains in detail what has been done. We open an assortment of junction boxes and I wish belatedly that I had enjoyed something a little more practical than the doubtful advantages of a classical education.

Duty-free cigarettes are produced and the atmosphere is very cosy. I feel that I have arrived.

I ask the way upstairs. A shocked silence greets my last word. I am crushed. I wish my scrubbing friend had been more explicit.

I am taken on top. The sky looks very blue. I feel as though I had known all about ohms and amps and boats for a long, long time.

"Finished?" comes the chief's voice from below.

I lift my virgin tools.
"Oh, yes," I say. "It was really quite simple."

At the Pictures

BE FAIR

THERE comes a point in a much-written-about controversy when the average reader, or the public mind, takes a particular side for no particular reason and sticks to it, ceasing even to notice arguments on the other. I'm afraid that point has been passed in the matter of *Cæsar and Cleopatra* (Director: GABRIEL PASCAL); I think there is a very general impression that this is the film on which so much money was wasted that the correct thing to do is to jeer at it and avoid it. Well, after a study of many of the protestations for and against I still believe my own attitude to the film is best summed up in the phrase I used a fortnight ago: I think moderately well of it. If by now you have your second wind and feel up to reading yet another disquisition on the subject, bear with me while I try to explain why.

The amount it cost was presumably emphasized—at least to begin with—as a deliberate “angle” in the film’s enormous publicity; but whatever the reason, the emphasis is very unfortunate. *Cæsar and Cleopatra* would have had to be stupendously good to overcome the handicap of being known to have cost a lot of money; for hardly anything that cost a lot of money can be definitely proved, to everybody, to be worth it. The film admittedly may not be worth it; it may have cost infinitely more than it is worth; it may be that the money could have been much better spent; but what, in the name of the Society of Accountants and Auditors, has that got to do with your enjoyment of it as a film?

Forget the money and consider the thing as an entertainment. As a film, as an example of the cinematic art, it is no great shakes, though I think anybody must admit that some of the Technicolor effects are very pleasing. But the work was conceived and written as a play, and as is well known Mr. SHAW refuses to permit anything

of his to go through that radical recasting process which is necessary before anything not written as a film can be made into a good one. What we have here is a very much elaborated version of the play, in which the crowds and the great palaces and the sea off Alexandria can be shown and not merely suggested in the background, while in the foreground are skilful players speaking dialogue which is often amusing and always worth listening to. This is not miraculously good or nobly praiseworthy, but it is by no means so damnable as some people would suggest. I believe the ordinary unexacting moviegoer will

is what the ordinary unexacting moviegoer mentioned above is fond of calling “sordid”; but much of it is excellently made, so that it has that indefinable quality of brilliance and intensity which keeps one continuously interested and watching with a sort of eagerness. The tale is of a bad loose girl (LINDA DARNELL), a good repressed rich girl (ALICE FAYE) and a weakly unscrupulous man (DANA ANDREWS), infatuated with the former, who sets out to get the latter’s money. The bad girl is murdered; from then on we have a “whodunit.” Besides the sentimental end, I admit, there is also in the story a nasty little touch of sadism; in fact this short summing-up, if it is to warn you honestly of all the bad points, is almost certain to imply that they matter more than in fact they do. But that cinematic merit, that “intensity,” that pictorial skill (Camera: JOSEPH LA SHELLE), make it well worth while for anybody who can appreciate them.

It seems to be quite usual to review film “musicals” as if they were all of equal merit; to mention the name of the star and then say “If you like So-and-So you will like the film,” usually with the stated or implied corollary “I think it’s terrible myself.” Well—while admitting that it’s very improbable that any “musical”



(*Cæsar and Cleopatra*)

ROMAN INFLUENCE

Ptolemy	ANTHONY HARVEY
Cleopatra	VIVIEN LEIGH
Cæsar	CLAUDE RAINS

be entertained. I believe he will like VIVIEN LEIGH as *Cleopatra* and be impressed by CLAUDE RAINS as *Cæsar*, and approve of a great many other members of the enormous cast. The only thoroughly indefensible thing about *Cæsar and Cleopatra* seems to me to be that it is not to be shown anywhere outside London before September 1946.

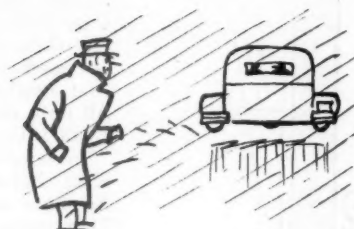
Anyone interested in films, anyone who likes to see a story confidently and freely told as only the cinema can tell it, should get more than equal pleasure (of a different kind) from *Fallen Angel* (Director: OTTO PREMINGER). This is an uneven piece, in the sense that it tails off rather into sentimentality after giving promise of a more austere realism, and its story

will ever be a great work of art, or even a good film—I still like to insist that some “musicals” are a great deal more enjoyable and entertaining than others. I like to admit it when they please me, and not merely to snarl in general terms (as if only negligible halfwits could bear “musicals” anyway) when they don’t. I like BETTY HUTTON, and I have a low taste for certain kinds of light music; but I didn’t much like *The Stork Club* (Director: HAL WALKER), because it is congested with sentimental misunderstandings, which waste a fearful amount of time. The things that gave me most pleasure in the picture were ROBERT BENCHLEY’s performance (the last time we shall see him?) and one band number with an electrifying minute or two on the drums. R. M.

Ferguson



No, I wouldn't mind being unable to use my car, if only that—



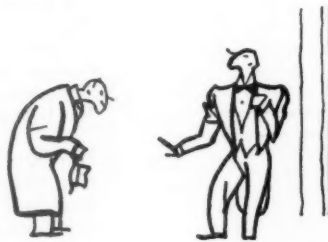
unpatriotic scoundrel Dobson didn't always seem to be wallowing in petrol:



I wouldn't at all mind going a bit short of food, if only that—



black-marketeer Jobson didn't always seem to have lashings of everything:



I wouldn't even mind being consistently unable to book a table anywhere, if only that—



grafter Hobson didn't always seem to be able to walk straight in and get one:



I wouldn't mind sitting up all night, if only that racketeer Robson didn't always seem to get a First sleeper with a flick of his eyelid:



I wouldn't mind being stranded without a room of any sort, if only that rogue Nobson didn't always seem to be able to get the entire royal suite—



and I could even put up with all the leaks in my roof, if only that twister Pobson didn't always seem to have an army of builders redecorating his conservatories.



As things are, however, life would be quite unsupportable if one couldn't sometimes get away, and shut oneself up in one's den, and—



stoke up a roaring fire, and— What? fuel-shortage? Well, as a matter of fact I don't really do so terribly badly about coal: you see, I happen to have a very good friend who . . .



Drury.

"Compliments of the season from the butcher's boy, grocer's boy, milk girl and Newspaper Boys' Union."

Ode on the Near Prospect of Nocturnal Amelioration

RISE proudly, Sun, to tread thy firmament!
No common dawn is thine,
But marked of old in Fate's august design
To cheer "the winter of our discontent";
Now is the dark hour warmed to genial May;
My bottle, water, hot, returns to-day.

What need in tragic numbers to recite
His sudden rupture, and the dire event
Of that disastrous night?
Or why expound through how minute a rent
How vast a flood may issue, or how long
Before the sleeper marks that aught is wrong?
Heavy the night, nor from the sequent morn
Was any gladness born;
With no kind speech nor reassuring laugh
The shop received him, but with gloomy chat
Of waiting lists and shortages of staff
And horrid things like that.
But now the heavens indulge a kindlier ray;
The lists have waited, but they wait no more,
And even now the post is on its way.
Rejoice, good toes! your agony is o'er;
Our mended bottle comes to us to-day.

Go sally forth with pitcher and with urn
And charge them deeply from some mountain spring
Against my love's return!
Urge high the gas, feed to the towering fire
Her ebon surfeit, and upon the pyre
Let mighty cauldrons sing!
And, neighbours mine, in fugue or curious round,
All duly ranged my balconies beneath,
Exalt this pious lay:
"No more the horror of his nightly moans
Shall chill the wakeful marrow of our bones,
No more our windows tremble to the sound
That came, we think, from his loquacious teeth;
His bottle, thank the Lord! returns to-day."

Ah, whence this tarrying of their chariot wheel?
Tarry thy wheel in concert, gentle Sun!
If once of old thou stay'dst on Gibeon's brow
Till those five kings confessed the victor steel,
Then take it easy now!
O lente, lente bid thy coursers run!
O lente, lentius, lentissime!
That ere thy light be done
My bottle even yet may come to-day!

Nay, we have had it, children, watch no more.
Yet weep not either, lift no voice in sorrow;
The gods have still innumerable gifts in store . . .
My blasted bottle may arrive to-morrow. M. H. L.

Read All About the Big Loan.

ENOUGH of recrimination; let us leave that to Parliament and Congress—where, I am reliably informed, they are already sharpening their metaphors. What readers of this paper want to know is just how this loan is going to affect them personally; and they want the low-down in a language that any fool economist couldn't understand. Well, they shall have it. Come, children, let us away through the Bretton Woods, over the tariff walls, round the Sterling bloc and right into Lord Keynes's confidence.

The loan (thing, esp. sum of money, lent to be returned with or without interest) amounts to £1,100,000,000 (eight noughts) at 2 per cent. repayable in annual instalments of £35,000,000 until the opening of the twenty-first century A.D. This means that we in Britain, every Tom, Dick and Harriet of us, is to get about £15 on the slate; but the Treasury inform me that individual applications cannot be entertained *at present*.

Some people think we ought to have snapped our emaciated fingers in Uncle Sam's face and tightened our belts a bit more. But do these people realize what rejection of the offer would imply? Without this loan we should be driven back into a mode of existence alarmingly primitive. We should live almost entirely on potatoes and oatmeal and there would be no luxuries. Imagine, if you can, what it would be like to be short of Virginian cigarettes. And no films from California! Eugh!

Does Bretton Woods mean a return to the gold standard? Opinions are divided and one man's opinion is as good as another's . . .

"Any old rings, c'grette cases, lighters or watches you don't want?" asked a small tout who appeared at my door recently.

DIARIES



"Have you the same sort of thing in leather with the quotations attributed to Bacon?"

"No," I said.

"I pay best prices, cash," he said, "for old rings, c'grette cases, lighters . . ."

"I've got a few torches."

"No, no torches," he said, and a pained look flickered across his eager face.

"Oh, just gold, eh?"

"S'right, why not let it go before this 'ere Bretton Woods knocks prices down. It will, you know, something shocking."

"But I thought . . ."

"You thought! Don't you see that this Monetary Fund will loosen up supplies. All that stuff deep in the heart of Texas will be dug up and put into circulation and your little pile will look just dam' silly."

At this point I invited the tout into the drawing-room and we went over the Agreement clause by clause. I gathered that he was acting in an unofficial capacity for the Bank of England, the Banque de France and the Italian Railways—and that he would not be round our way again for several months. In the end I sold him a cruet and a stop-watch for fourteen shillings. I should have received more but he had some doubts about the gold which had been attacked by salt or something.

Does that help at all?

Next comes the Sterling bloc; no need to go too carefully into that though, is there? We will merely note that Britain's net quick external liabilities stand at more than £3,052 millions, that total capital disinvestment during the war years amounts to £5,053 millions, and pass on.

We should now deal with Empire Preference, but a contemporary of vast circulation has taken the words right out of my mouth. It merely remains, therefore, for me to announce this week's competition. Add a fourth line to this couplet:

*The Sterling pound to the war had gone;
To the ears in debt you'll find him.*

The sender of the first correct solution opened can have my quota of almighty dollars. Hod.

A Love Poem

WHEN I am in the desert of a dinner party, or sitting on some tired smoke-wreathed committee, or listening to a speech about the United Nations, my thoughts run to you, my darling, as swiftly as winged antelopes.

In the noise and confusion I come to you who are quiet, from the impermeable boredom of conversation I turn to the sound of your voice, and the horrible secret faces of strangers merge into yours which I know and love so well.

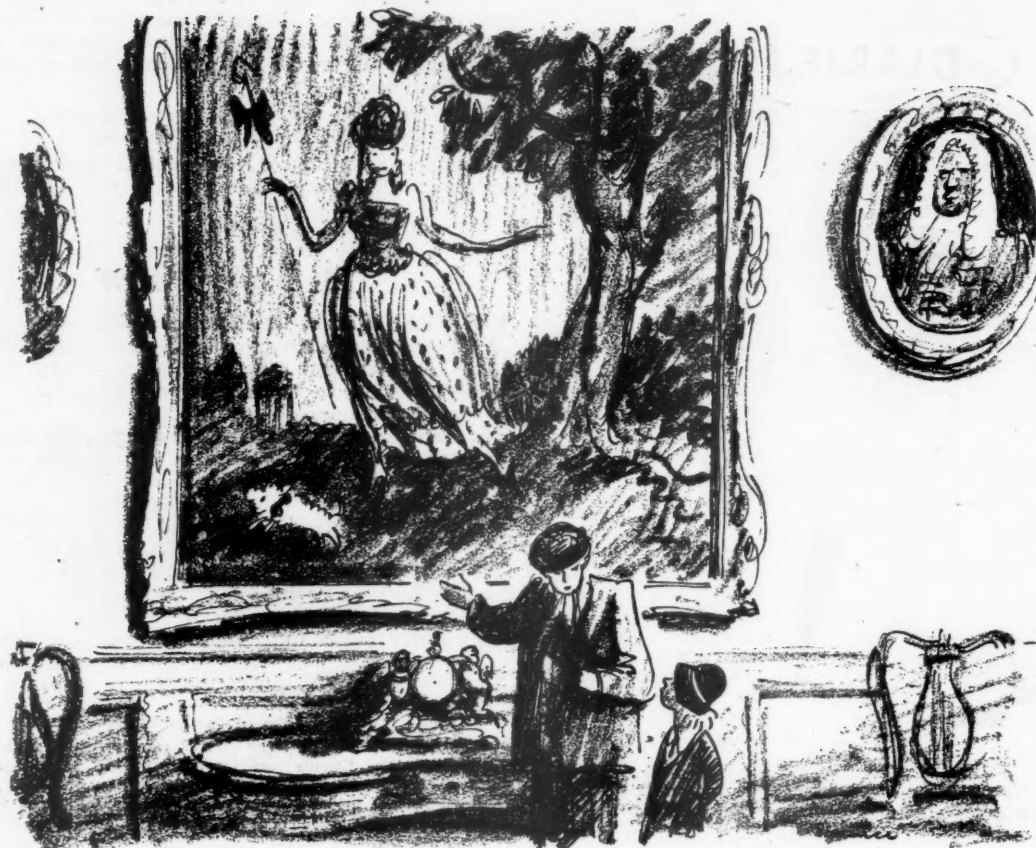
You will understand this, and yet when I tell you that yesterday I was swept with a wild wave of love for you standing beside a counter of pickled peaches in Portman and Jasons, you will not understand. Indeed, it was very surprising.

V. G.

Glimpse of the Obvious

"The five racecourses of the district (two of which rank among the finest in the Empire) are far more typical of the gambling spirit of Johannesburg than its great university, or its art gallery, designed by Sir Edward Lutyens, its public buildings, and the many decorative parks."—"Everybody's Weekly."





"Was she a land-girl, mummy?"

By Hedgerow Elms

YESTERDAY my routine ramble through field-paths
bereft of bramble—
Northington to Earlihamble, Wiggleswick and
Silverdown—

Was extended and benighted, though the moon essayed to
light it,

By a pair of self-invited visitors who came from town.
Bill had just returned from Burma, Tom, A.B., detested
"her" ma,

Both desired a terra firma far removed from seas and
queues;

Two days of their six-and-fifty would, they thought, be
fine (and thrifty)

In a cottage, rural, nifty, so I couldn't quite refuse.

My abode, by woods enrhombused, never heard even
distant bomb "bust"

Nor is plagued by forty-hommes-based movement in the
hamlets four;

Half a mile away's the nearest, fifteen minutes to the
dearest,

Each a pleasant after-tea rest and a change from radio
bore.

E is quiet, no one fusses, W the same (or thus) is,

N's renowned for handsome hussies, S is famed for
glorious beer;

So we started with the NEWS-round, which unkind men
call my booze-round,

To admire the noble views round at this fine time of
the year.

Then we set off back the SNEW-way just to let them see
a new way

Which one man, with lots of looway to make up, con-
sidered great,

Followed by a slower WENS-way (what does mud on
heavy "tens" weigh?)

And three footsore weary men's way ended as the clock
struck eight.

After rest we fetched a compass, stepping softly without
rumpus

Lest a boggy-man should stump us, by S-W-S-N.

Consonants to vowel unmated may not be articu-
lated,

But we grieved not nor debated, for it did not matter
then.

J. B. N.



THE COMMERCIAL GODMOTHER



"... but the boy in the next cave is only seven, and HIS mother lets him ride one."

Your Career as a Radio Engineer

WHEN a customer pants into the shop with his set (your delivery van is out of order, as usual) pretend to be engaged in some operation of great delicacy. The illusion may be given by standing perfectly still with both hands inside a disembowelled set, your face turned up to the ceiling, your tongue out and one eye tightly screwed up. Sustain this attitude for at least two minutes before saying "Got it!" and putting the thing away out of sight.

It is not necessary to listen to what the customer says, but there is no harm in nodding from time to time. At the end you can say "Sounds like the usual trouble with these jobs," and give the customer's set a disparaging slap. "However," you say, "I'll see what I can do." This should carry an inflexion which suggests that you have taken a personal liking to the customer. He will then thank you very much and say that there is no hurry. As if you didn't know.

When he comes back in a month's time, apologetic, respectful, timidly

hopeful, startle him by producing at once from under the counter a handful of pieces of metal, old valves, lengths of wire and rusty screws. Push them under his nose and say "No wonder you were having trouble!" On no account be more specific than this, as you have of course no idea what sort of trouble it was.

He will look at the oddments and say "Good heavens!"—not having any idea what you mean, but hating to seem ignorant. You are on safe ground, because if he weren't ignorant he would have done his own radio repairs.

You take up one of the bits of metal and deftly bend it double. "And *that*," you say, with a snorting little laugh, "was supposed to be your magnetic infringer."

"Good gracious! And was that the trouble?"

"Not the real trouble, no. What do you think of this?" You push a piece of aluminium and a piece of ebonite disgustedly across the counter. "I wonder you got any reception at all

with rubbish like that in your thrust-figgler."

"In the thrust-figgler, eh?"

"Well, that was in the thrust-figgler"—you snap the ebonite in half—"but this"—you snatch up a hammer and batter the aluminium out of shape—"well, I don't suppose you will believe me when I tell you what *this* was part of."

"I've no idea. What?"

"You'll laugh when I tell you."

"Never mind."

"It was the base-nut of the collation baffle."

"No!"

You then take the customer's set down from the shelf behind you and dust it carefully, handling it as if it were made of gold-leaf. It needs dusting, as it hasn't been touched since the day it came in, except for the tying of a label on the volume control knob.

"However," you say, "I've never been beaten yet—even if I do have to work all Saturday afternoon and Sunday on a job. Four pounds."

The last two words should only be breathed at this stage. Your customer should hear them, but only so faintly as to make him hope that he has not heard them aright. The seed is sown, and the pause which follows should be devoted to reading aloud, but as if to yourself, the writing on the label. Your whole demeanour should be that of a man who is hoping to find some error in the items which would enable him to bring the figure down. Such an error should never be found, however.

"Dismantling, cleaning, overhauling, inspecting," you mutter to yourself—"one pound. Supplying and

fitting new gunge-points, feed-arm, worrall-plate, variable gungwinder and burst-refiner: one pound ten shillings. Testing, reassembling, dismantling, inspecting: ten shillings. Supplying and fitting stainless three-pin fubble-nut, re-winding frayed follicle-cleat: eight shillings. Special six-hour bench-test with Ferguson's gullometer extension-arch disclosing faulty bimbble-iron: seven shillings. Supplying and fitting double-strength tin-filled bimbble-iron with supporting toggle, reassembling, testing: five shillings. Total, four pounds." You look up with a smile. "Can't make it any different, I'm afraid."

Your customer is not yet feeling for his wallet.

"I haven't charged you for the two fiddle-pins," you say—"we'll throw them in for good measure."

"That's very kind of you," says your customer, and puts four pounds on the counter.

As he leaves it is as well to mention that it pays to buy a good set in the long run, and that you have a "Golden Monarch" coming in very soon. If you can sell him this you have an income for life: everyone knows that "Monarch" workmanship is so exquisite that even to oil the coils costs twelve pounds ten. J. B. B.

Home Chat

"DADDY, do you salute soldiers still?"

"No, Peter."

"Why not?"

"Because they do not salute me."

"Peter will think that very small-minded of you, darling. Fancy a grown man behaving so petulantly."

"Why should I salute soldiers?"

"Peter and I understood it was not the soldier you saluted, but his badges of rank."

"Yes, and as it happens, *clever*, a private does not have badges of rank!"

"You used to salute the privates, daddy."

"I returned the salutes privates gave me. Now they do not give me any salutes, I do not return them."

"Would you salute a general if you saw one?"

"No, Peter."

"Not if he was in uniform?"

"Not if he was in a cocked hat, so long as I was in my demob suit."

"I don't suppose Peter will think that makes sense, darling. You first say it is the uniform you salute, and now you pretend you do not salute unless you wear a uniform yourself. You might just as well say you would not raise your hat to a lady unless you were wearing a skirt."

"If you were in uniform, daddy, and you saw a general in *his* demob suit, would you salute him then?"

"That depends entirely on who the general was."

"Now, darling, you are getting just like the people who used to make you so cross. You said once that they were all in the Pay Corps, and were too shy to salute an officer unless they had been introduced."

"My sweet, Peter was simply asking

whether I salute soldiers in my demob suit."

"He said in *their* demob suit. And he said *generals*."

"My answer is that I do not. And let that be the end of it."

"Well, daddy, why did the man outside the theatre salute *you*?"

"Now that is really clever of you, Peter. I think you have caught daddy there."

"He did so because it is not customary or sensible for a man in uniform to nod, wave to me, or lift his hat. He was a commissioner, wasn't he?"

"But what Peter means is why did he salute you when you had no badges of rank?"

"No, mummy, what I mean is why did daddy salute him back?"

"Yes, why did you, darling, and in your demob suit?"

"I don't know what the feminine of Smart Alec is, my sweet, but that is certainly what you are trying to be."

"Did the man who got the taxi know you were a lieutenant-colonel, daddy?"

"How on earth could he?"

"Then why did he salute?"

"He was judging by *me*, Peter. He knew a woman of my type would have married nothing less."

"Supposing daddy had been an admiral."

"Ah! He knew daddy was not that, Peter."

"How did he?"

"Because admirals do not wear long fair moustaches."

"Peter was speaking, darling. Please try not to interrupt my son so much. Yes, Peter? Supposing I had been an admiral?"

"Would he have saluted you just the same?"

"I presume so."

"You said sailors saluted differently."

"Yes, darling, I'm afraid you did say that. And I remember you saying that the second-in-command of your battalion saluted that way himself, and you told him one day that if he wanted to salute like a sailor he might as well hook an umbrella over his left arm, because he would look no more silly in front of the men."

"All Peter is asking, darling, is whether a commissioner outside a theatre would salute any differently if he thought I were an admiral. My answer is that he would only salute differently if *he* was. Now are you satisfied?"

"Well, then, daddy, as he gave you a *soldier's* salute, why did you give him a sailor's one back?"

"What *do* you mean?"

"Peter is quite right, darling. I noticed myself that you did. Though some people would say it was more like a dustman after his Christmas box."

"My dear girl, what sort of jackass do you think I should look if a fellow got me a taxi outside a theatre and I immediately sprang to attention and slapped him up the smashing kind of guardee salute that I should give the King?"

"But why give the other sort?"

"Oh, BECAUSE IT IS THE ONLY SORT A MAN CAN GIVE IN HIS DEMOB SUIT WITHOUT FEELING AN ABSOLUTE BUFFOON!!!"

"Well, if that's so, darling, all I can say, as a mere woman, is there must be something radically wrong with the whole principle of saluting."

Topsy Turvy

XII

TRIX, my little sunspot, I'm quite moribund with Christmas are you, my dear the shopping, and the coping, it's too satisfying to think we've got twelve clear months now before we have to go through it again, my dear could I get my poor Haddock so much as a new pipe, not anywhere though I ransacked the city, you would think, wouldn't you with all the trees we have in the land we could produce a few small pieces of wood with holes in them in which tobacco could be burned conveniently, because after all what is a pipe, they're made it seems of French briar, but why not British briar my dear you have so much surplus space up there I suppose you couldn't get Henry to plant a grove of briars for Haddock's pipes, Jill could fabricate them when she's demobbed if ever, because there's quite nothing she can't do with her hands, she makes the most appealing toys for children in the torpedo shed, or somewhere, and as Haddock says, on the other hand of course I need hardly say that Haddock has just given up smoking again for quite ever, and this time he says it's final because of the dollar area or something, nevertheless darling I should go ahead with the briar-grove if I were you, talking of good resolutions I've

been in conference with the better self a good bit recently, and about some things I've made the most steely decisions, haven't you, because my dear I do think that this year is going to be so unspeakably macabre that really one must make an utter surrender to the better self and be a sort of torch and beacon to those about one, don't you agree darling, the drear thing is it is so difficult to get the practicalities clear, well for instance you know the new rule is If we've got anything we want export it, which may sound like the signature-tune of a bat to you my dear but actually it is political economy, and of course every penny you spend is the last and fatal step to inflation, or perhaps deflation, I never have known which is which and now I've abandoned the struggle, well of course the very first thing I vowed was to utterly expel the juniper-juice and everything from my life, except after 6 on alternate Saturdays because, my dear I thought if only we all did that what quantities of gin we could export to America, well then of course Haddock says he thinks we don't export gin very prolifically to America I'm thinking of whisky, which I never touch, too discouraging, however that is actually going to be the way of life this year

because of inflation, and then of course accounts, my dear I've bought the largest ledger and I'm going to record quite every penny and Peppiatt we spend, of course I know there have been years that started thus before, but genuinely this will be too different, I'm going to have two columns, one for expenditure which is the Done Thing or unavoidable and another in the reddest ink for unpatriotic or bestial expenditure like cigarettes or juniper juice.

Well then the drill is at the end of the week I show the page to Haddock who will add up both columns which is a thing I cannot do, and sign the page, after which my dear for everything in the red column we buy an equal amount of these soporific Saving Certificates, that is of course if the cash is in sufficient supply, my dear it is rather a satisfying system don't you think and if you and Henry would like to try it by all means, only I don't suppose your Henry can add much can he, I ought to warn you perhaps that one small serpent is just perceptible, and that is which column to put what in sometimes, well to-day my dear what with the New Year burgeoning, and the little bosom surging about and warming to the fellow-creatures I went to the Festering Gallery and bought rather a bizarre picture by Carl and Taffeta Brule for Haddock, you know darling or perhaps you don't poor rustic they're the couple who paint all their pictures together, I definitely can not envisage why, but there it is they're the most electric couple and quite penurious, so whenever I can I do the Christian thing, I can not pretend however that they magnetize my Haddock much, in fact he did once say that he'd swim the Channel on a cold night to avoid poor Taffeta, and it's true that the last picture of theirs I bought was one of those rather triangular women with green hair, which did take a little time to settle down in the home, though I think I do see what they mean now, it's the pattern and the composition and everything that matters, however this picture was quite unsimilar, my dear the Pool of London with the Tower and Tower Bridge and tugs and steamers and two barges with enchanting cinnamon sails, which I did think Haddock would like for his study because of old haunts and everything, well my dear I purchased impulsively and took him to see it,



"Sort your letter for you, sir?"

later, *without* however telling him it was a New Year gift for him, well my dear he gazed at it with *noticeable* aversion and *all* he said was Where is the *wind*, which of course I ought to have known because he is so tiresome about the wind in pictures, however, I said *Must* there be a wind perhaps it was a calm day, and he said *Look* at the *flags* the wind's easterly at one side of the picture and *westerly* the other, which I now perceived was *too* right, however I said I expect Carl painted one side and Taffeta the other only it was on different days, and anyhow I said don't you like the *sails*, at which he said *no* barge would have all those sails up above Tower Bridge and *this* one if the tide's flowing will charge into *London* Bridge and lose her *mast*, he also said the tug's funnel was *four* sizes too large, and *where* was the steamer's anchor-cable or something, so I said Oh well you don't want a *coloured* photograph and he said Yes he'd *much* prefer it, at which darling *gulping* down the tears I was *just* wondering if I could *cancel* the purchase when *who* should roll up but Taffeta and Carl all burbulous and grateful, on which of course the ghastly facts emerged, you should have *seen* Haddock's face, I must say he behaved *too* well, said *quite* nothing about the wind, and was *even* affable to Taffeta, however outside, and this is the *point* of the entire narrative, he said In *which* column will you put expenditure like *that*, so I said In the *Done* Thing Column of *course* because it *must* be the done thing to nourish the anæmic and subnourished artist even if he does *not* cause *unanimous* raving, so Haddock said Well you may be right my dove of course I *should* have said that *any* picture by Taffeta Brule should be in the *Bestial* Expenditure Column, on the *other* hand I do know *this*, that every time you buy a picture of a *triangular* woman with *green* hair *fifty* per cent. by Taffeta Brule I am *not* going to put an *equivalent* sum in the *Savings* Racket, so there the matter rests darling, I *only* mention all this to show you the *kind* of enigma that *may* confront you if you and Henry take up the Topsy Loyalist Accounting System.

About my *other* Resolutions darling I doubt if I can reveal the *whole* soul now because on the *first* day of a new year as *you* know darling there *may* be the *faintest* indication of *fatigue*, however the *main* thing as I have said is the Torch and Beacon Movement, illuminating and beckoning to *all* the comrades and utterly determined *not* to enjoy oneself for *simply* years, of course Haddock says I've gone quite



"Last winter, of course, we didn't have the car at all."

"masokist" or something, merely because I said *Why* do we women wear all these *garments*, why not *export* the lot to America and let us women go about in smocks and *sandals*, after all you can scarcely see a stockinged leg in London to-day so why not be *logical*, as a matter of fact I've made myself the *most* seductive though spiritual smock and came down to *breakfast* in it, but Haddock says I am *not* to wear it at the House or *anywhere*, which only shows you how difficult it is to be *helpful* economically, oh dear, the best and briefest of years darling, your *frustrated* masokist Topsy.

A. P. H.

Another Lost Cause

"HOUSEKEEPER reqd by clergyman of the University, to manage small house; someone who understands proper care of silver, etc., and the ways of the real upper classes, and would be likely to become a friend and old family servant."—Advt. in "*Oxford Times*."

"Mr. Follick, new Socialist M.P. for Loughborough, gave the House of Commons two surprises in his maiden speech on Wednesday. He put forward the suggestion that reformed spelling was the only way to combat the atmocic bomb."—*Indian paper*.

He's got it groggy already.

At the Play

"THE LAND OF THE CHRISTMAS STOCKING" (DUKE OF YORK'S)

AN intensive course of children's Christmas entertainments leaves me wondering what odds one could get against the nursery being made the field of elfin abduction on Christmas Eve. The probability of such an incident is apparently very great, from what I have been seeing; and it is a point on which the morals of the sprites do not bear examination. No remorse for the parents, no thought of the punctured festivities left behind, holds them back, nor does the code of manners of the little people dictate any note of apology pinned to the nursery table. It occurs to me that a parent who really believed in fairies and was in the least fond of his children could do no less than arrange for an all-in policy at Lloyd's against Christmas Eve risks, coupled with an armed guard in the nursery. Not to take these simple precautions would be the grossest criminal negligence. For a long time I have been searching for an acid test of goblin-faith, and I am glad to have one by me at last.

The kidnapping which starts this musical play was carried out with professional aplomb by *Father Christmas* himself, to whom Mr. FREDERICK RANALOW gave an irresistible geniality. *Tilly* and *Tom*, who had been unwise enough to be overheard saying rude things about fairies, were transported with incredible swiftness—no visas required—to the old gentleman's empire, where a course of remedial punishment was quickly laid on for them. The sentence ran that they were to be chivvied until such time as they caught the Christmas spirit, but this was not very difficult when surrounded by the folk from the nursery rhymes; and a Borstal that provided ice-cream and allowed nannies to come too must be written down as enlightened.

I had the advantage of having with me a Representative British Infant, who prepared a kind of agenda as we went along, and I see on this that after *Father Christmas* comes the *Odd Man*. This curious personage combined the functions of principal liaison officer, clown, and general busybody. The R.B.I.'s notes read: "Like that rather mad old lady we saw in the bus. Very jumpy but funny." This seems to me a fair description. Mr. RICHARD GOOLDEN, who earned it, worked unsparingly and obviously had the rich approval of the audience.

Then came Miss GRETE UNGER'S

Dandy, our old friend Pussy in the Well, to please us with some acrobatic dancing of which any kitten in the very prime of its cavortings would be proud. *Dame Foot*, alias *The Old Lady Who Lived in the Shoe*, obtruded her powerful personality everywhere and by no means confined her disciplinary attentions to her own fry. *Father Christmas* seemed to be the only one immune from her swirling birch, but, as the R.B.I. pointed out, all those children must have been awful and she did keep them and the shoe very neat and clean. Miss ELEANOR HALLAM fecit. Mr. SYDNEY BROMLEY'S *Simple Simon* had more engaging ways, one of which was falling flat without giving notice and another was fishing off the footlights. He made some good casts, and only his characteristic neglect to put on a hook, which it is hoped he will remedy at later performances, deprived us of the excitement of seeing a record double-bass landed from the orchestra.

Tilly and *Tom*, who were well played by Miss PATSY ANN HEDGES and Mr. COLIN SIMPSON, acquitted themselves bravely in rounding up those arch-villains, *Tom the Piper's Son* and the *Knave of Hearts*, and after receiving the congratulations of the court they were dispatched home again. On carefully weighing up this tale of their adventures the R.B.I. and I came to the conclusion that it was gay in a simple kind of way, might have been funnier, but was never sickly nor boring; and we added a rider that Mr. RANALOW and Miss DIANA ELLINGER (the *Nannie*) sang nicely, that Miss MARY HONER and her sisters of the corps-de-ballet greatly distinguished the proceedings, and that Mr. PHILIP GOUGH had done a swell job on the sets and dresses. ERIC.

"PETER PAN." (SCALA)

As I had not seen this curious extravaganza for thirty-eight years perhaps I may be forgiven if I record without irreverence that I had forgotten how thickly BARRIE laid on the treacle in the nursery scenes. The whole *Darling* business is undeniably sticky. *Mrs. Darling* has lines that creep right into one's spine and that even Miss MERCIA SWINBURNE cannot make tolerable; and *Peter* himself has some very nasty corners to negotiate. The flying in the first act is of course a winner, and *Nana* still goes down well, but it seemed to me that not until Act Three, when the *Pirates* and the *Redskins* got going, did the R.B.I. of to-day really sit up. The lower notes on the lyre of mother-love mean little to the modern child whom the cinema has

reared on a perfectly natural diet of high-velocity custard pies. It is therefore *Hook*, *Smee* and the *Crocodile* who come out strong, providing timeless fare. The R.B.I., asked which he thought was the play's big moment, replied without any hesitation "When *Smee* tore his sewing and *Hook* thought his trousers had gone."

Miss CELIA LIPTON'S *Peter* is attractively faunlike. Miss SWINBURNE does her skilful best. Mr. GEORGE CURZON is *Hook* and Mr. *Darling*, both excellent. *Wendy*, *John* and *Michael* find a good team in Miss JUNE HOLDEN, Mr. PHILIP KAY and Mr. MALCOLM SOMMERS; Mr. TEDDY BROGDEN is villainously *Smee*, and the articulation of Mr. COLIN STROUD'S *Crocodile* is remarkable. "Was it jet-propelled or had it a gas-turbine?" demanded the R.B.I. I quite see that writing for children is no fun any more. ERIC.

Jargon of the Schools

THE general public thinks of schools as the school it went to itself. This has been conclusively shown by the pronouncements of corporate bodies and eminent minds during the last few years. Another Act, an entirely new terminology, and more recently a Ministry of Education pamphlet explaining it all, have stunned a nation just coming to grips with the Fisher Act of 1918; and a short explanation of some of the different kinds of schools past, present and possible may be of assistance to the poor dog on whose puppies the new panaceas are to be tried.

Board School. A term still in use among persons over fifty to designate any school of which they disapprove.

National School. Generic term for country schools. Originally a school run by the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church, a title considered blasphemously snappy in 1811.

Council School. A term still in use among persons aged from thirty to fifty to describe any school of unknown status.

Elementary School. Any school not proved to be secondary.

Primary School. A term avoided as highbrow by all right-thinking citizens. Generally regarded as equivalent to Elementary, with a sneaking suspicion that it isn't.

Central School. A kind of elementary school in the middle of anywhere. It means different things in different



"Good-bye for now, Helen—I won't keep you."

places, and is thought to mean even more.

Senior School. See "Central School," but more so.

Modern School. This is a new one, and not even educationists—as distinct from people practising education—have yet decided what it means, except that it refers to an elementary school which is to be regarded as secondary. The general public may let its imagination run riot.

Secondary School. Formerly any school not proved to be elementary; now any school not proved to be primary (*q.v.*). Sometimes, but not infallibly, distinguishable by its head-gear.

Nursery School. Like a senior crèche, but more modern.

Special School. A school whose pupils are specially disqualified, and staff specially qualified.

Technical School. A place where

the pupils are taught to do useful things.

Grammar School. A place where the pupils learn useless things. Its prestige is due to the fact that in the Middle Ages grammar, or gramarye, was a kind of witchcraft, and gave birth to the word "glamour."

Private School. A term usually reserved for small seminaries technically inferior but socially superior to those run by the State.

Public School. A note of apology is necessary for including this among legitimate educational institutions, as its escutcheon nowadays is considered to bear the bend sinister. No two people having ever agreed on a definition, the only point of which any man can be really sure is that his own school is one.

Day Continuation School. A name without a deed . . .

As this list is meant only for people

with normal intelligence we have not yet touched on Voluntary Schools, Aided Schools, Provided Schools, Direct Grant Schools, Sunday Schools or the London School of Economics. These will be dealt with in a special supplement for advanced students.

Literary Candour

"A pike opened here revealed amongst other partly-digested debris, a nail brush (used), a small empty soda-water bottle, a cinema ticket and a moist copy of one of Oliver St. John Gogarty's poems."

Letter in "Irish Times."

"He complained that returned prisoners of war with long service were put through the most elementary forms of rifle."

Daily paper.

It's being muzzle-loaded that hurts.



"The one I'm working on now will completely revolutionize aviation—it just flaps its wings!"

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

An Exquisite Picture-Book

IT would in any case be pleasant to welcome a reprint of *The Country Child* (FABER, 8/6), for Mrs. ALISON UTTLEY's record of life on a Victorian farmstead well deserves its place among our minor rural classics. But if you buy the new edition you buy redoubled pleasure with Mr. C. F. TUNNICLIFFE's woodcuts. The revival of English illustration is a very important part of the revival of English taste. Our painting, from Hogarth and Blake onward, has been largely illustrative; and art's partnership with literature has made for strength and popularity. Those who decry popularity decry illustrating as the most deliberate and modest of all attempts to make art serviceable. Yet there seems to the lay mind nothing degrading about "what is called illumination in Paris," as Dante called it. Mr. TUNNICLIFFE illuminates Mrs. UTTLEY's farm world, with the umbrageousness of his trees, the heady spate of his streams, the cold fragrance of his ferns, the furriness of his ferrets, the crisp contours of his Christmas pasties. He produces a comment more exquisite than the text—being the greater artist—but in no way exceeds his commission. His part of the book can, and must, be shown to children. Their elders can read the text when the children have gone to bed.

H. P. E.

"Sherston" Sassoon

In *Siegfried's Journey: 1916-1920* (FABER, 10/6) Mr. SIEGFRIED SASSOON surveys his past with the leisurely detachment of an "elderly quietist" whose interest in himself, though no longer intense, is still his most pleasurable emotion. The narrative opens in August 1916, when he was in hospital at Oxford with gastric fever. Thankful, he says, to be absolved from any further part in the Battle of the Somme, he was delighted when his friend Robert Ross took him, as soon as his health permitted, to Garsington, Lady Ottoline Morrell's home. At Garsington he found himself in a cultured pacifist environment, the effect of which was to create the mood expressed in his poems of disillusionment with the war. These poems made a name for him, and when he issued a statement condemning the war and declining to take any further part in it, the authorities (as readers of the *Sherston* series will remember) viewed his outburst tolerantly, attributing it to shell-shock. Later in the war he was at the Front again, and by the time peace arrived found that the combination of soldier, conscientious objector and war poet had given him a position which enabled him to meet many well-known persons. When he deals with the more famous of his contemporaries his determination to see them in the best possible light sometimes dilutes their reality, but in his less elaborate moments he can be really vivid, as in a delightful account of a meeting with Hilaire Belloc.

H. K.

Close-up of Bernhardt

MISS MAY AGATE was lucky enough to begin her career in Bernhardt's class, in Paris in 1912, and later to act with her and become her friend. In *Madame Sarah* (HOME AND VAN THAL, 9/6) she gives a delightful account of her apprenticeship and of Bernhardt's methods as a teacher. These were unorthodox, and for those days in France wildly so. In revolt against the rigid conventions of the traditional school of French classical acting, in which novices were obliged to master a set number of ways of sitting down and a whole schedule of gestures, each of which had a significance as exact as the movements of a tic-tac man, Bernhardt was striking out for a naturalism divorced from systems, which she deplored; and she made her pupils learn to act by acting and not by preliminary heart-searchings on how to act. Her custom was to drop them in at the deep end and then, with extraordinary patience and sympathy, to help them out. Of Bernhardt's own performances Miss AGATE believes that the part of *Lorenzaccio*, in Alfred de Musset's play of that name, was the peak. She must have been as lovable a creature as she was tremendous an actress. Declining to tolerate the awful chill pervading some of the hotels in which she had to stay on tour, she developed the exciting habit of adding her bedroom furniture to the fire, and after an incendiary incident of this kind in Spain she was heard to murmur sadly "l'acajou ne chauffe bien." When her young pupil was in need of a duenna she recommended her family to engage someone of good report, "par exemple, la veuve d'un clergyman." And when Miss AGATE's mother died Sarah comforted her with the words "Je suis votre maman théâtrale." That is indeed a pleasant thing to remember.

E. O. D. K.

Annie S. Swan

ANNE S. SWAN, whose domestic and historical romances gave pleasure to thousands from the middle eighties down to the present war, had a remarkably busy and successful career, the main outlines of which are sketched by Miss

MILDRED ROBERTSON NICOLL in *The Letters of Annie S. Swan* (HODDER AND STOUGHTON, 8/6). Her first novel, a copy of which she sent to Gladstone, who found it "beautiful as a work of art," was widely noticed; and a few years later she was so well known that Dr. (later Sir) William Robertson Nicoll gave her name to a woman's magazine which he was starting. It was her personality, writes Miss Alice Head, who subsequently edited the magazine, which gave it its special appeal—"Her monthly correspondence feature 'Over the Teacups' has never even been approached. Thousands of women poured out their troubles to her." A Scotswoman, whose early success was due to her sympathetic treatment of her countrymen, she had a great love for London, living there with her husband, a doctor, during her most active years. When she was nearing fifty she retired to a Georgian house with five acres in Hertford, where a practice was bought for her husband. It was, she wrote in her autobiography, "exchanging a rich feast for a dish of herbs." But she continued to keep in touch with the world, which, to judge from her correspondence with a great variety of persons, she knew thoroughly and estimated shrewdly.

H. K.

Food First

Ever since Baron Liebig invented the first patent food and the first patent fertilizer the advocates of fresh food grown with muck have been on their guard against both devices. Liebig's is an industrial policy—a quantitative one; his opponents' is agricultural and qualitative. Modifications on both sides may cause some *rapprochement* between the schools, but their aims strike one as incompatible. So when Mr. DONALD P. HOPKINS, "a chemist concerned with the production of fertilizers," suggests that dung or compost should supply humus but chemical fertilizers additional nutrients, he is really begging the question, though he has written a most able, lucid and good-tempered book. The compost school has stated that chemicals poison soil, increase disease and reduce the nourishing power of food. *Chemicals, Humus and the Soil* (FABER, 12/6) admits most of the symptoms but attributes them to other causes. Yet industry's threat to human life is not ignored. There is little pretence that the world is going to keep either in food or fertilizers those who do not keep themselves. "Soil fertility may be more important than social security." All plants actually need is manure; and a sound policy would increase and conserve our resources in this kind and resist demands to turn good food into umbrella-handles and industrial alcohol.

H. P. E.

Phantoms and Atoms

The dust of bombed buildings and watering places, the emptiness of bombed squares, pervade the new volume of short stories by ELIZABETH BOWEN (*The Demon Lover*, JONATHAN CAPE, 7/6). Her last novel before the war, *The Death of the Heart*, was most carefully set in its background of a terrace in Regent's Park, a bachelor flat with a gas-fire, and a resort on the South coast. Now, after the war years, this same background appears like the ghost of itself, shattered and derelict. The London square with its yawning gaps and exposed wallpaper has "the appearance of belonging to some ages ago"; "one got a feeling of functional anarchy, of loose plumbing, of fittings shocked from their base." Spectral, too, are the stories themselves, for Miss BOWEN has lately been attracted to themes of haunting. Her extremely feminine and sensitive intelligence and her hair's-breadth dissection of motive suit the ghost story (of the "Turn of the Screw" variety) well enough.

Two of her most successful are "The Cheery Soul" (a little extravaganza in which the departing cook leaves a message in the fish-kettle: "Mr. & the 2 Misses Rangerton-Karney can boil their heads. This holds 3.") and "The Inherited Clock," a mystery of time displaced. In both these Miss BOWEN recovers what seems a lost art of story-telling—she gives us a plot. The rest of the sketches are slighter, but it goes without saying that all of them are subtle almost to a fault and written with a miraculous grace and finish.

P. M. F.

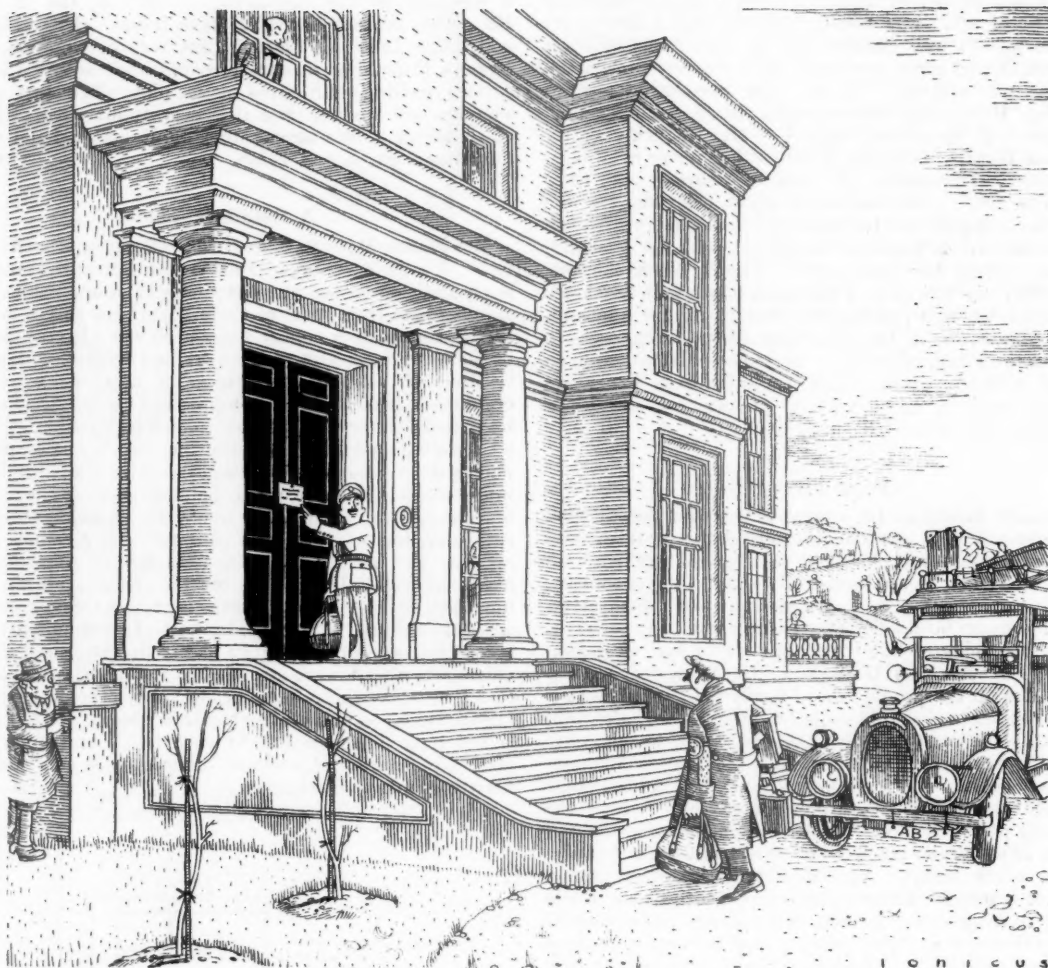
A Soldier's Tale

Mr. ROBIN MAUGHAM sees very clearly and writes very well. His book, *Come to Dust* (CHAPMAN AND HALL, 7/6), is an addition to the war chronicles of young soldiers, and stands apart from most of them. Perhaps this is because, though an amateur soldier who hated war with intelligence, he shows in page after page a trained professional instinct for the well-being of his men and a great awareness. In September 1941 in a troop-ship bound for the Middle East, he writes, "Every day I grow fonder of my men." Later, he records bewildered conversations he has overheard, and makes one realize that the English soldier has not changed much since Agincourt. The book is scrappily written in note and letter form, so it is not the detailed story of a campaign but of individual purpose, and has importance because the author is never ashamed of describing his exact feelings. It tells of battles round Tobruk, sand, muddles, killings, woundings, short gay leaves and the general drabness of war. The best chapter of all records a conversation Mr. MAUGHAM had with a captured German officer when both were stranded in the desert while a dust-cloud, covering the vehicles of one side or the other (neither knew which) came slowly towards them. That chapter is not only dramatic but lit with truth, and must be as good a realization of national differences as can ever have been put into conversation.

B. E. B.



"Well, cheerio, Fred—look after yourself."



"It says 'Welcome Home Sir George'."

Midwinter

IF you love weather and its change of ways
 Love, for diversity's sake, December: praise
 The clarity of the glass-grey light that plays
 On the cold corridors of streets; when black frost's bleak
 asperity greets
 The early traveller; when a hyacinth haze
 Thickens at cold-as-charity dusk between the rays
 Of headlamps. When never a soft air of earth's breathing
 strays
 Out of the iron-fast soil at the bare tree's base
 To daze with false promise of Spring, but all stays
 Budbound, nut-hard, nunshut in holy severity
 And the shrunk twig displays
 No hint of latent leaf or tender shoot's temerity.

When, walking to work of a morning, you may surprise
 A light like the dawn of all dawns out of the cracking
 skies,
 Arctic and awfull, dragging the urban soul
 Clean out of its orbit, setting the stretched heart's pang
 On the pure and impervious wastes at the earth's
 extremity
 Where the icefields shudder and clang round the skirts of
 the Pole:
 And be recalled to time and the hour by the sight
 Of the street-lamps, thriftily kindled by man all night,
 Now set ablaze with magnificent superfluity
 By the late-risen sun looking through their embarrassed
 glaze.

My Cousin Giuseppe

EVERY Thursday my wife trails off to London and dishes up at the Slav's Roast and Samovar. Why, I don't know, unless it's because her father was once an Italian. He had no hair though and spoke very Scottish, and you could have passed him off anywhere. In fact he had no time for foreigners and that and would have changed his name to McCurdy but for his business.

I don't know what these Slav's Roasts are like, but personally I'd just finished a few sardines when I heard the cat outside after the tin.

I opened the front door.

"Puss! Puss!" I shouted.

At first there was no answer and then one of those war prisoners came out of my bushes.

"Carducci?" he said.

"Micklethwaite," I said.

"That bell don't ring so much," he said.

"What's the game?" I said.

"You don't know me?" he said.

"Why should I?" I said.

He laughed you could hear half-way down the street.

"That's-a good," he said. "Now I tell something make you laugh."

"I very much doubt it," I said.

"You got a surprise," he said.

"Ain't I your cousin Giuseppe?"

He started singing and jumping about like a lunatic, though he was even greyer than I am.

"You'd better come inside," I said.

He hung his cap on the clock and gave me two onions.

"That's-a for you," he said, and was in my arm-chair before you could say knife.

"You got a fire. You got a house. That's-a nice," he said. "You got a cigarette? I no got."

"What did you say your name was?" I said.

"Call me Frank," he said. "How's yours?"

"Look here," I said. "Let's get down to brass tacks."

"Sure," he said. "Call me Giuseppe."

"I don't want to call you anything," I said. "What I want to know is what's the idea?"

"Why not?" he said. "How I come here? You got a laugh. You want that stuff?"

"I want some sort of explanation," I said.

"Ain't I telling you?" he said. "Ain't me and my old lady in Monte Gallino?"

"I suppose so," I said.

"And the old lady she say why ain't we gone to America. Well, here I am. I got a coupla dogs. I got a coupla fellas. We all have good time. So I say why go to America? Maybe after. And then the war come and I get in Italian Army. Boum. Boum. My goodness."

"I dare say," I said. "But where's this getting us?"

"Ain't I telling you some more?" he said. "Ain't they taking me prisoner? You take-a that axe, they say. And me a nice little fella. That axe bigger than me. I say I no work. I never work. They say how's your trade. I say I'm musician. So a big guy say that's-a fine. Take-a hold of that spade. A big spade like that. Soon my hands is burning. This ain't no work for a musician, I say. And then a captain come up with a long shave, ain't it?"

"How should I know?" I said.

"Like you got hairs on your face," he said.

"Hairs on your face is either whiskers or a beard," I said. "And that's all there is to it."

"You got it," he said. "And this captain don't find a guy nowhere. And I got a razor. Shave you? I say. I shave you with my eyes shut. Take it easy, he say. You and me is strangers. But he look a good fella and after I done him he feel his face. That's all right, he say. That's-a not bad. I sign a bit of paper for you. So he write a bit of paper and I take it to a Bohemian."

"I don't care about Bohemians," I said. "Let's get on with it."

"A Bohemian ain't so bad," he said. "I shave this guy and dig his plants. And he got a girl learning to be a musician. So one day I say to this girl you make a mistake. What you want is to play your finger so. And she ask her father and he make me music teacher. But after one, two month like a teacher I say I got to go. I no like the place. So this girl give me a dress and a chief for my head and I fix my chest up like a lady and I escape. But they catch me near where they make the watches. Switzer."

"Impossible," I said. "What sort of a war is this supposed to be?"

"Ain't it Austrians and that stuff?" he said. "And the Kaiser? You like that guy?"

"That's thirty years ago," I said.

"Ain't I looking it," he said.

"This is the limit," I said.

"She was big all right," he said. "Bang I don't know so much. Well these guys they catch me and they say you girl? I say no. You woman? I say no. How are you then? I say Italian. Son of a Pork, they say, and hit me with clubs and make me take off my suit. And they all bust out laughing. So the boss say put your suit back just like you was. So I look a lady again and two of these guys march me off."

"Is that the end of it?" I said.

"You ain't heard about half," he said. "But here I am in Vienna and the war going bust. They ain't got no oil. No beans. They ain't got nothing. And I'm frying soup. You want to hear about that soup?"

"Not now," I said.

"You ain't smelling soup like that," he said. "And up come a little guy. I never seen a face like he got. And his suit just like a spaghetti. What are you, I say. I'm Italian, he say. *Dio mio*, I say, you don't look like no Italian to me. How long you been here? Six month, he say. So I give him a hot wash. Then I shave him. Then I comb his hairs. And who you think was that guy?"

"I've not the slightest idea," I said.

"Your *Unc* Giacomo," he said.

"Fantastic," I said.

"Ain't it?" he said. "So the Kaiser go bust and me and *Unc* Giacomo sit down to get to America."

A lot of whistling and bicycle-bells started up.

"Ain't that being a prisoner again?" he said. "I got to go and you don't know hows about your *Unc*."

Outside a lot more Italian prisoners were hanging about.

"I tell these guys how you and me is cousin," he said.

"A pity I'm moving," I said.

"It ain't nothing," he said. "I got a bicycle."

£50 REWARD

is offered for the correct information leading to the smashing of our shop-window. Any information may be left with any solicitor, who will pass it on to us; we will pay all expenses if information is proved to be correct. Cheques will be received through solicitor. No names will be disclosed.

Channel Islands paper.

Throw a brick through it. If not satisfied, throw another—or same brick in reverse direction. Then make out cheque payable to "Mr. Punch."

Homewards

AFTER ten days in the Collecting Centre at Sidi Bishr, during which Captain Symphon and I played seven hundred and fifteen hands at solo whist with an ex-A.P.M. and an ex-J.A.G. without being arrested, we sailed for Europe in ss. *Damendam*. The voyage to Toulon lasted four days and we played five hundred and seven more hands at solo whist. By the time we docked Symphon had lost the seventy-four piastres he had won at Alexandria and I had turned a deficit of forty-seven piastres into a profit of eleven francs.

From Toulon we went overland to Dieppe by train. Symphon was appointed Train Adjutant, the duties of which office consisted of sharing a first-class compartment with the O.C. Train, while the rest of us were herded five or six in a compartment. We had lost our J.A.G. at Toulon, but the O.C. Train proved an asset to our solo whist school, having an incurable habit of going *misère* with bare kings, so that Symphon had turned his deficit into a profit of seven English shillings by the time we arrived at Dieppe, and I was in a position to add eight-and-fourpence to my War Gratuity.

We had only one night at Dieppe, but there was English beer in the bar of the Mess, and though Symphon and I were notorious for our abstemiousness in the Middle East (there was at one time some talk of our being barred from the G.H.Q. Club in Cairo on these grounds) Symphon said that he had heard that practically no beer was

obtainable in England and that it was therefore a patriotic duty to make hay while the sun shone. We did, with the result that Symphon went down on four abundances and I had a long succession of abortive solos. We went to bed with the tragic knowledge that Symphon was only twopence up on the whole trip, while I was in debt to the A.P.M. to the extent of fourpence.

Even this, however, could not entirely cloud our happiness next morning in the knowledge that by the evening, wind and weather permitting, we should once more be in England, a land for which, despite the charms of Egypt and Kugombaland, we had both retained a modicum of affection.

The voyage to Newhaven was uneventful except for a rather macabre speech through the loud-speaker warning us to jump into the water in orderly fashion if we struck a mine, and a *misère ouvert* by the late O.C. Train which was only made possible by Symphon's having so nearly strangled himself in tying his lifebelt that he was even less conscious than usual and thought the O.C. had called abundance.

The first really good hand that I had held since we passed Malta was ruined by a noise on deck announcing that land had been sighted. Being careful to maintain a nonchalant calm we ascended, and saw through a heavy mist the cold brown outline of the Sussex coast. Slowly the ship approached the shore, and presently Newhaven pier loomed out of the fog, and seven fishermen, intent on their

rods and lines, gave us a typical English welcome. They ignored us completely.

Symphon, with his two battered black cases that had accompanied him throughout his overseas tour advertising his poverty and rectitude, was first through the Customs, and therefore obtained the appointment, for the last time, of O.C. Train. The journey to Wivelshot lasted only a couple of hours. We had decided to abandon solo whist and have a good look at the countryside as it flashed past, but as the countryside was by this time entirely hidden by a thick fog we got out the cards once more and were still playing when the train drew in at Wivelshot. I was "all square" on the trip from Egypt and Symphon showed a net profit of fourpence. As he remarked, it seemed hardly worth making the journey for such a small sum.

"Write and tell us whether it is true that there is practically no beer in England" had been the parting appeal of our friends in Cairo, so as soon as we were settled in our quarters we made a conscientious reconnaissance. Personally I retired to bed after a few early successes, but Symphon did not get in until half-past ten, when he reported that of seventeen hostelries he had visited only one was without beer.

"But it doesn't affect me like it did before the war," he said. "In those days I should have behaved oddly after sixteen half-pints."

Then he carefully put up his mosquito-net over the bed and crept between the sheets.



"I got the wrong number—anybody here want Ludgate 1127, a Mrs. Parkinson?"

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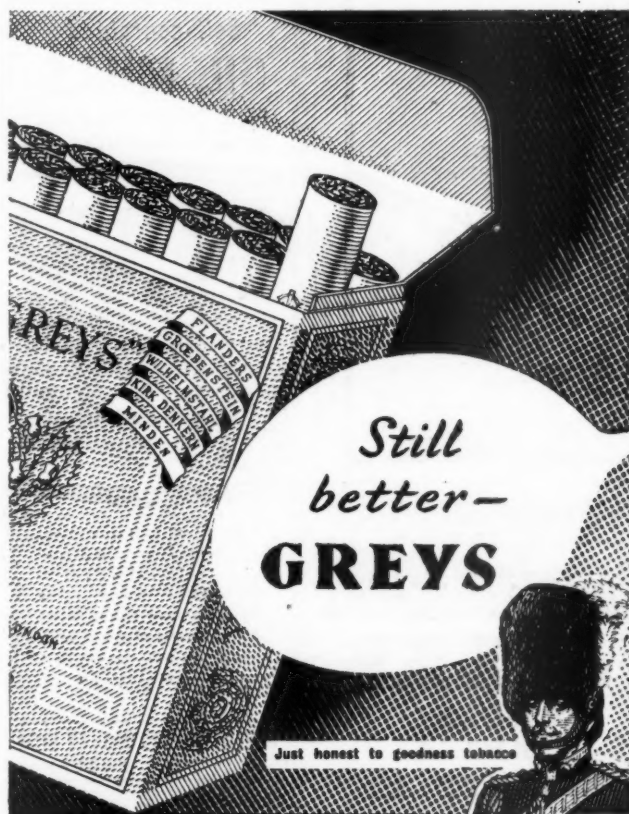
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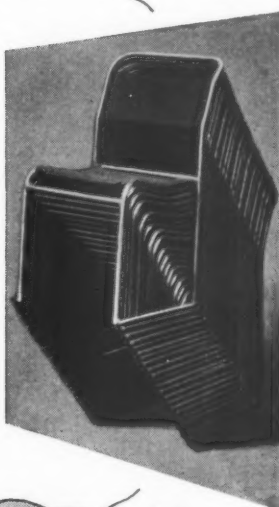
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